

**JOINT STAFF REPORT  
WINTER FACT SHEET NO. 5  
Columbia River Compact  
March 22, 2002**

**Purpose:** To review ongoing commercial fisheries and consider commercial fishing options in the mainstem Columbia River.

**TAC:** This Fact Sheet was not reviewed by the TAC.

**MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES**

***Endangered Species Act (ESA)***

- Fisheries being considered at this Compact are addressed in a Section 7/10 Application outlining proposed non-Indian fisheries that the states of Washington and Oregon submitted to the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) on November 3, 2000.
- The ESA limits aggregate fishery impacts to  $\leq 2\%$  for listed wild steelhead and  $\leq 6\%$  for listed hatchery steelhead.

***Interim Management Agreement***

- An Interim Management Agreement covering fisheries for upriver spring chinook, summer chinook, and sockeye is in effect for 2001-2003.
- The Interim Management Agreement includes a sliding scale spring chinook harvest matrix for 2001-2005 and allocates upriver impacts between non-Indian and treaty Indian fisheries for 2001-2003.
- Based on preseason run size forecasts the Interim Management Agreement limits impacts to listed upriver spring chinook to  $\leq 2\%$  for non-Indian fisheries and  $\leq 12\%$  for treaty Indian fisheries in 2002.

***Non-Indian Upriver Impact Allocation***

- Non-Indian fisheries will be managed in accordance with the guiding principles, fishery management objectives, and impact sharing matrix adopted by the Oregon and Washington Fish and Wildlife Commissions and the Columbia River Compact.

***Excerpts From Mainstem Columbia River Spring Chinook Allocation For Non-Indian Fisheries 2002-2003***

**Fisheries Management Objectives**

- Manage the mainstem Columbia River commercial fishery to attain the commercial allocation of Willamette spring chinook.
- Manage non-Indian upriver spring chinook impacts to provide for equitable sport and commercial hatchery spring chinook harvest opportunity in the mainstem Columbia River downstream of McNary Dam.
- Maximize the economic benefits of spring chinook harvested by the commercial fishery by focusing the majority of the commercial fishing effort early in the spring chinook season in years where there is sufficient Willamette spring chinook abundance. Commercial fishing later in the season would be dependent on remaining commercial upriver spring chinook impact allocation and would be structured to minimize effects on the sport fishery.
- Maximize sport fishing opportunity during late March through April, *and extending into May if possible*,<sup>1</sup> to provide angler opportunity during the period of peak spring chinook abundance. *Recognize associated economic benefits after mid-March*.<sup>2</sup> The number of recreational fishing days in April will depend on the annual abundance of upriver spring chinook, fishing conditions, and the level of effort.

<sup>1</sup>. Additional language endorsed by WFWC.

<sup>2</sup>. Additional language endorsed by OFWC.

- Based on preseason run size forecasts the impacts sharing matrix allocates the non-Indian upriver impact limit 60% for mainstem sport fisheries (1.02% impact rate) and 40% for mainstem commercial fisheries (0.68% impact rate).

### ***Willamette Spring Chinook Management***

- The Fisheries Management and Evaluation Plan (FMEP) for Willamette spring chinook limits impacts for all freshwater fisheries in 2002 to  $\leq 15\%$  on wild Willamette River spring chinook.
- For 2002 the Willamette River Basin Fish Management Plan (WFMP) allocates surplus hatchery Willamette River spring chinook 73% for sport fisheries and 27% for commercial fisheries.
- Based on the preseason run size forecast the WFMP allocates 9,700 surplus hatchery Willamette spring chinook to mainstem commercial fisheries in 2002.

### ***Zone 6 Sturgeon Catch Guidelines***

- The Sturgeon Management Task Force (SMTF) met on January 28 to discuss recommendations for 2002 Zone 6 sturgeon fishery management guidelines.
- At the January 31, 2002 hearing the Compact adopted catch guidelines for Zone 6 sport and commercial fisheries in 2002.

<b><i>Zone 6 Sturgeon Catch Guidelines For 2002</i></b>			
Pool	Sport	Treaty	Total
Bonneville Pool	1,520	1,300	2,820
The Dalles Pool	700	1,100	1,800
John Day Pool	165	335	500
Total	2,385	2,735	5,120

## **WATER CONDITIONS**

- Columbia River flow measured at Bonneville Dam ranged between 120 kcfs and 190 kcfs during the last half of February and exceeded 135 kcfs only once during the first 11 days of March.
- The Columbia River has been very warm with water temperatures measured at Bonneville Dam ranging between 44°F and 46°F during the last half of February and the first half of March.
- During March 12-16 flows measured at Bonneville Dam ranged between 141 kcfs and 192 kcfs, primarily due to spill for Spring Creek Hatchery releases.
- Flows have dropped to previous low levels with flow at Bonneville Dam ranging between 123 kcfs and 145 kcfs since March 17.
- The Willamette River had been low and clear with flow measured at Salem of less than 20,000 cfs and visibility at Willamette Falls exceeding two feet during February 28 through March 6.
- During March 7-11 flows at Salem ranged between 22,000-30,000 cfs and visibility at Willamette Falls ranged between 1.8-2.5 feet.
- Since March 12 flow at Salem ranged to a peak of 56,000 cfs on March 13 and subsequently declined to a flow of 31,400 on March 21.
- Visibility at Willamette Falls did not exceed 1 foot during March 12-19 but quickly increased to 2 feet on March 21.

## FISHERY UPDATES

### *Non-Indian Winter Sturgeon Season*

- The winter sturgeon season consisting of 11 30-hour fishing periods was completed on February 15.
- Catches were as expected with 2,709 white sturgeon and 151 marked spring chinook landed during this fishery.

### *Non-Indian Salmon Commercial Tangle Net Demonstration Fishery*

- At the January 31, 2002 Compact hearing six 14-hour daylight fishing periods were adopted for all of Zones 1-5.
- At the March 7, 2002 Compact hearing an additional five 24-hour fishing periods were adopted for all of Zones 1-5.
- An additional 48-hour fishing period was adopted for all Zones 1-5 at the March 19, 2002 Compact hearing.
- During the first eight fishing periods (February 25-March 13) marked chinook catches ranged between 140 and 434 and averaged 265.
- Catches during the ninth through the eleventh fishing periods increased with marked chinook landings ranging between 1,243 and 1,501 and averaging 1,396.
- Landings for Thursday March 21 totaled 900 marked spring chinook and are projected to total 1,500-2,500 marked spring chinook for Friday March 22.
- To date an estimated 54 white sturgeon have been landed in this fishery.
- Staff has monitored a total of 240 boats and 617 drifts in this fishery to date.
- Based on monitoring results through March 20 the immediate mortality rate for unmarked chinook is 1% and 89% of the chinook were released in condition 1 (vigorous, not bleeding).
- The mark rate for chinook has ranged between 42%-72% and averaged 51% during the first seven fishing periods.

<i>Chinook Catches and Impact Rates</i>									
Fishing Period	Chinook Kept				Chinook Released				
	Total	Upriver Stock	Willamette River Stock	Other Lower River Stock	Total	Upriver Stock	Other Lower River Stocks	Upriver Impacts	
Jan 7-Feb 15	154	19	115	20	54	25	29	0.007%	
Feb 25-Mar 1	538	180	306	52	414	320	94	0.015%	
March 4-8	762	303	384	75	556	426	131	0.022%	
March 10-15	2,064	1,024	870	170	2,089	1,734	355	0.083%	
March 17-21	3,902	2,117	1,493	292	4,453	3,805	648	0.173%	
March 22, proj.	1,500	851	543	106	1,848	1,602	246	0.074%	
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	2,500	1,418	905	177	3,080	2,670	409	0.123%	
<b>Totals to Date</b>	<b>8,920</b>	<b>4,494</b>	<b>3,711</b>	<b>715</b>	<b>9,414</b>	<b>7,912</b>	<b>1,503</b>	<b>0.378%</b>	
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	<b>9,920</b>	<b>5,061</b>	<b>4,073</b>	<b>786</b>	<b>10,646</b>	<b>8,980</b>	<b>1,666</b>	<b>0.427</b>	

- Through the first four fishing periods (February 25-March 4) the steelhead:chinook ratio ranged between 2.2:1 and 3.0:1.
- During the March 6 through March 20 fishing periods steelhead:chinook ratios ranged between 0.4:1 and 1.3:1.

- Through March 20 the steelhead mark rate has ranged between 20% and 56% and has averaged 40%.
- The projected steelhead handle through March 22 is expected to total 13,300-15,800 steelhead of which 8,000-9,500 are expected to be unmarked and 5,300-6,300 are expected to be marked.
- Staff believes some steelhead are being handled more than once.
- Based on monitoring results to date the immediate mortality rate for steelhead is 1.7% which would produce an immediate mortality estimate of 226-269 unmarked steelhead.
- To date 84% of the steelhead handled during this demonstration fishery have been released in condition 1 (vigorous, not bleeding).

### ***Non-Indian Spring Chinook Sport Fishery***

- Effort is building in the lower Columbia mainstem sport fishing.
- Poor water conditions in the Willamette and Cowlitz have hampered the fishery below St. Helens and effort in that section of the river during 2002 is down from 2001.
- Effort during 2002 in the area from Vancouver to Bonneville Dam is high in comparison to the same time frame in 2001.

<b><i>Effort Estimates and Catch Rates in Lower Columbia River Sport Fishery</i></b>			
		<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>
Boat Count		237 (Thur 3/22) 26% above St. Helens	245 (Wed 3/20) 70% above St. Helens
Boat Anglers:	Chinook kept	.16 per boat	.08 per boat
	Chinook released	.06 per boat	.06 per boat
Bank Anglers:	Chinook kept	.03 per rod	.04 per rod
	Chinook released	.02 per rod	.03 per rod

- Angler trips in the lower Willamette river have totaled 9,800 through March 17 and have produced catches of 250 marked chinook kept and 118 unmarked chinook released.
- During the last three weeks effort in 2002 (9,800 angler trips) has been less than 2001 (14,300 angler trips) primarily due to poor water conditions. Catch rate has been similar with 0.037 chinook caught per rod in 2002 as compared to 0.038 chinook caught per rod in 2001.
- The mark rate to date has been 68% as compared to the preseason expectation of 80%.
- To date effort has been low in Washington tributaries to Bonneville Pool.
- The sport spring chinook fishery in The Dalles and John Day pools has been very slow with no spring chinook landed to date.

### ***Treaty Indian Winter Setline Fishery***

- The treaty Indian setline fishery was open from noon January 1 through noon January 31.
- Catches were extremely low with landings of one white sturgeon in Bonneville Pool, two white sturgeon in the Dalles Pool, and four white sturgeon in John Day Pool.

### ***Treaty Indian Winter Commercial Fishery***

- At the January 31, 2002 hearing the Compact adopted a winter commercial season that was open in all of Zone 6 from noon Friday February 1 through 4 PM Thursday March 21.

- The season adopted at the January 31, 2002 Compact hearing was subsequently modified inseason to prohibit the sale of spring chinook effective 6 PM March 9 and the John Day Pool was closed to commercial fishing effective 6 PM March 15.
- Through March 17 commercial landings have totaled 1,370 white sturgeon, 35 chinook, 78 steelhead, and 71 walleye.
- Pool specific landings through March 17, including winter setline fishery, are estimated to be 187 white sturgeon in Bonneville Pool, 861 white sturgeon in The Dalles Pool, and 322 in the John Day Pool which represent 14% of the Bonneville Pool guideline, 78% of The Dalles Pool guideline, and 96% of the John Day Pool guideline.
- Landings in Bonneville and The Dalles Pool are tracking behind 2001 while landings in the John Day Pool are tracking ahead of 2001.

## FISHERY RECOMMENDATION



### *Non-Indian Salmon Commercial Tangle Net Demonstration Fishery*

- The Joint Staff is recommending to extend the ongoing fishery to allow the commercial fishery access to their Willamette River hatchery spring chinook allocation.

<i>Joint Staff Recommendation</i>	
•	The Joint Staff is proposing an additional fishing period for the small mesh tangle net demonstration commercial fishery.
<b>Season:</b>	5 AM - 9 PM Monday March 25 (16 Hours)
<b>Area:</b>	Zones 1 - 5.
<b>Sanctuaries:</b>	Grays River, Gnat Creek, Elokomina-A, Abernathy Creek, Cowlitz River, Kalama-A, Lewis-A, Washougal River, and Sandy river sanctuaries.
<b>Gear:</b>	Net not to exceed 150 fathoms in length. 5½ maximum mesh size restriction.
<b>Allowable Sales:</b>	Adipose fin-clipped chinook salmon and sturgeon.
<b>Participants:</b>	Columbia River commercial fishers with appropriate licenses and legal gear that attended a state-sponsored workshop concerning live captive commercial fishing techniques and possess a permit that allows participation in this fishery.
<b>Miscellaneous Regulations:</b>	Soak times, defined as time elapsed from when first mesh enters the water to when last mesh leaves the water, must not exceed 45 minutes.  Use of recovery boxes will be required on all lethargic or bleeding fish.  Each participant will be required to have 2 operable recovery boxes or one box with two chambers in place to participate in fishery. Operable recovery boxes will require a flow of 16-20 gallons per minute to the box or each chamber. Each box shall be operating during any time that the net is being retrieved or picked.  Lighted buoys required on each end of nets being fished between sunset and sunrise.  Quick Reporting Rule remains in effect for Washington buyers.
<b>Catch Expectations:</b>	1,500-3,000 marked spring chinook 1,800-3,700 unmarked spring chinook 400-1,000 Willamette hatchery spring chinook (4,100-5,100 cumulative total) 0.076% -0.166% upriver impacts (0.454% -0.593% cumulative total) 3,800-9,300 steelhead handled

- Impacts to listed salmon and steelhead are well within ESA-related catch limits.
- Catch of Willamette hatchery spring chinook is well below the 9,700 fish catch allocation.

- Additional fishing period is intended to continue progress towards hatchery spring chinook catch allocation.
- Night fishing maximizes fishing opportunity.
- Proposed season is not expected to exceed 9,700 Willamette Hatchery fish limit or the 0.68% upriver wild impact limit.
- Steelhead impacts are expected to remain within the 2% limit.

Winter Salmon Season							
	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>FEB</b>	24	5 AM-7 PM 25	26	5 AM-7 PM 27	28	5 AM-7 PM 1	2
<b>M</b>	3	5 AM-7 PM 4	5	5 AM-7 PM 6	7	5 AM-7 PM 8	9
<b>A</b>	10	6 PM 11	12	6 PM 13	14	6 PM 15	16
<b>R</b>	17	6 PM 18	19	6 PM 20	21	6 PM 22	23
<b>C</b>	24	6 PM 25	26	27	28	29	30
<b>H</b>	31						
Adopted Fishing Periods:..  Proposed Fishing Period:.. 							

## NEXT COMPACT HEARING

- The Joint Staff recommends that the next Compact hearing occur at 1 PM Tuesday March 26 at the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife headquarters Commission room, located at 2501 SW First Avenue, Portland, Oregon for the purpose of reviewing ongoing fisheries and considering commercial fishing options in the mainstem Columbia River.

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife  
 Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife  
 March 22, 2002